

Chicopee Register

Chicopee's coolest cat

Resident forms bond with feral cat

By Dalton Zbierski
Staff Writer

On a frigid winter afternoon, a 65-year-old Chicopee resident made an acquaintance that altered the course of his life. It was on that day that Pandoli met Maxwell Edison, a feral, homeless cat in need of his help.

By sharing Maxwell's story, Pandoli hopes to inspire others to care for one of the many homeless animals who live in the city; braving the elements, hoping to survive another day.

"It was the second week of January; we had this pretty brutal ice storm," said Pandoli. "I live on a corner on the second floor and have a pretty good vantage point of three or four blocks. I happened to look out the window, and there was this cat walking down the sidewalk on a sheet of ice. He was limping, he was shaking and he seemed disoriented."

Pandoli, a lifelong cat lover, couldn't stand the sight. That evening, Pandoli bought the animal cat food, which he placed besides a tree about 50 yards from his house.

The next morning, the food was gone. Pandoli wondered if it had been eaten by the cat; his question was answered several days later.

"I continued putting food in the bowl at night, and he was eating every night. I moved it from the tree towards my back porch about a foot-and-a-half everyday. Probably, a week into it, I saw that it was the cat that I had seen," said Pandoli, who eventually lured the cat to his porch.

See **MAXWELL** page 4

Taken in by resident Bob Pandoli, this once-feral cat, "Maxwell Edison," has formed a bond with the man and is serving as an inspiring story throughout the city.

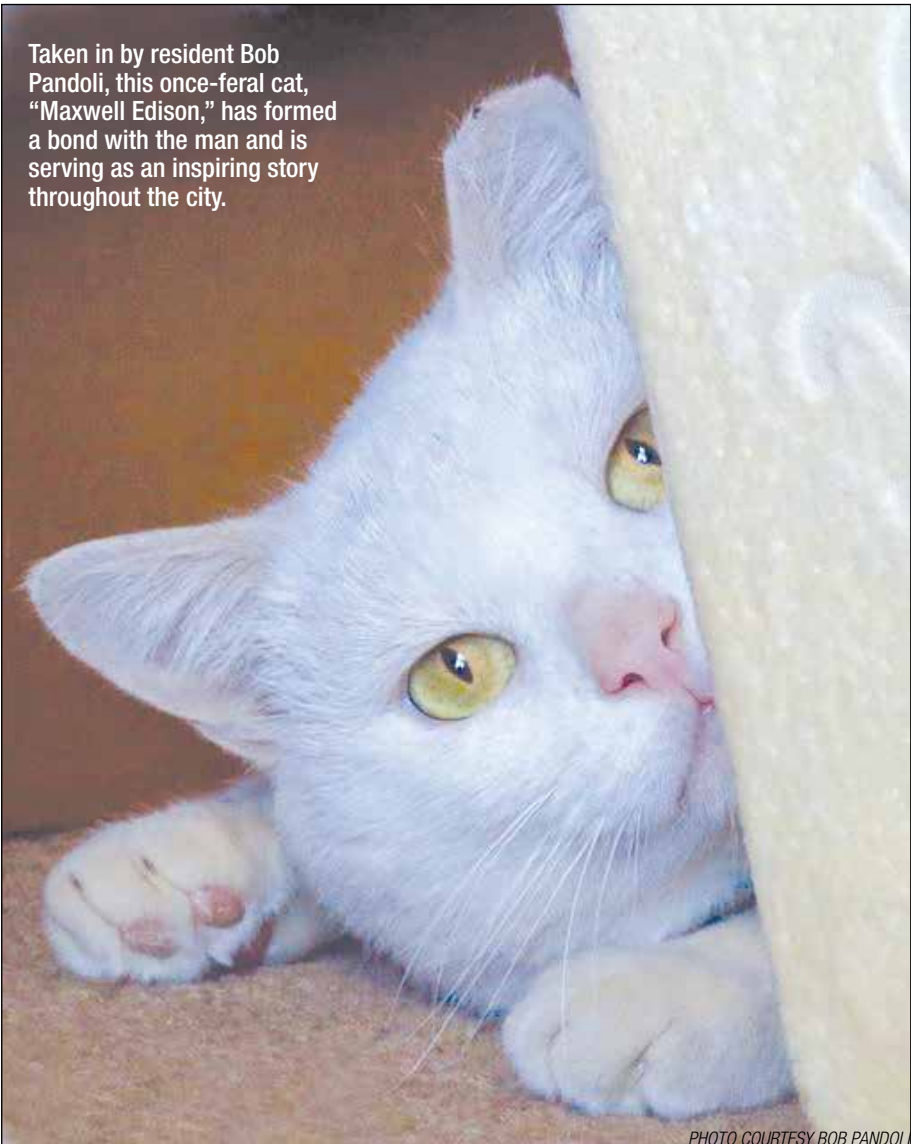


PHOTO COURTESY BOB PANDOLI



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COMMUNITY

TDI shows true testament of city support

By Dalton Zbierski
Staff Writer

MassDevelopment's Transformative Development Initiative has not abandoned Chicopee Center during the area's greatest time of need. The program, which vowed to revitalize the West End, recently made \$65,000 in grant funding available to the downtown district.

The Chicopee Chamber of Commerce will administer 13 grants in the amount of \$5,000 each. The money will directly benefit small businesses and nonprofit cultural institutions in Chicopee Center that are chosen as recipients.

"I think it's a true testament to the act of revitalization; that you have to stick to a community through its ups and downs," said Julie Copoulos, Chamber president. "We're



STAFF PHOTO BY DALTON ZBIERSKI

While normally bustling with traffic, Chicopee Center is now quiet following the outbreak of COVID-19. The Chicopee Chamber of Commerce will administer 13 MassDevelopment Transformative Development Initiative grants with hopes of revitalizing the city's West End.

facing a down right now so it is uplifting to have communities and organizations continue to do outreach and help those

who are in need."

Applicants must hail from the designated downtown district area and meet all eligibili-

ty criteria, which includes having been in business for at least six months. To be awarded, an operation must demonstrate its long-standing commitment to servicing the downtown area.

The deadline to submit applications will fall on April 10 at 5 p.m. Applications are available on the chambers website under "Covid-19 Resources," and recipients will be announced on April 17.

Copoulos complimented TDI Fellow Andrea Monson for her dedication to improving the city. Monson was unable to comment on the development when contacted, but Copoulos made it clear that her effort is appreciated.

"Chicopee has this amazing connection with MassDevelopment; it was a connection

See **TDI** page 4

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Chicopee Register

Bellamy students hungry for education

Funding gap looms at RiverMills

Will raise a flag in neighborhood

School Committee seat remains vacant

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COA stands tall during pandemic

Services still available to city's seniors

By Dalton Zbierski
Staff Writer

A pillar of the community continues to stand tall in Chicopee.

The RiverMills Center itself remains empty as a result of the novel coronavirus, but the Council on Aging is valiantly pursuing its mission of aiding the city's senior population.

The COA announced several new developments on April 6. The Transportation Department at RiverMills will provide seniors with emergency rides to supermarkets, pharmacies and critical doctor's appointments.

"We hadn't been offering transportation but were getting calls from people who needed treatments such as radiation or chemotherapy. They said, 'We just don't have a ride there; you were our ride.' In those emergency cases,



STAFF PHOTO BY DALTON ZBIERSKI

The RiverMills Center, 5 W. Main St., sits relatively empty as public buildings remain close to help limit the spread of coronavirus infections. Staff continue to serve the community in a variety of ways, call 536-5733 for more information.

we do pick them up. These are live-saving trips," said Sherry Manyak, executive director of the COA.

One can order a ride by calling 413-536-5733. In addition to transportation, the senior center is also facilitating multiple meal programs.

Thanks to the contributions of Western Mass. Elder Care, Meals on Wheels lunches have been made available to seniors, who are encouraged to contact WMEC at 413-538-9020. Manyak detailed an additional service that has been made possi-



FILE PHOTO

The RiverMills Center offers a ride service for seniors in Chicopee. To book a ride, call 413-536-5733.

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Counting Turtles

Did you find Turley the Turtle in last week's edition of the Chicopee Register? Turley appeared 10 times.

Here are the official submissions:

Steve Curylo, Chicopee: 8

Be sure to look hard in this week's paper! Email your count along with your name and town of residence by noon on Monday to tyler@turley.com.



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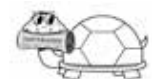


We've learned a lot lately about what that means. Most importantly, we've been reminded of the strength and resilience within our community.

As a community bank, we're pledging to support those around us in new ways. If you have questions, concerns or feel that we can help, please reach out to our Customer Care Center at **800-322-8233**, or visit countrybank.com/COVID19 for more information.

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NOTICE

ERRORS: Each advertiser is requested to check their advertisement the first time it appears. This paper will not be responsible for more than one corrected insertion, nor will be liable for any error in an advertisement to a greater extent than the cost of the space occupied by the item in the advertisement.

Census counting continues amid coronavirus pandemic

By Dalton Zbierski
Staff Writer

The 2020 U.S. Census will not halt for COVID-19, but its timetable has been altered. On March 21, the U.S. Census Bureau announced a series of adjustments, offering citizens an additional two weeks to respond.

The “Self-Response Phase” of the decennial census is ongoing; it began on March 12 and was set to end July 31. Residents now have until Aug. 14 to respond to the census, which can be completed online, by mail or over the phone.

City officials are fully committed to facilitating the process. Registrar of Voters Janina Surdyka is encouraged by her early observations.

“I’m really optimistic after seeing our rate of response because Chicopee had a

32.8 [percent response rate] compared to the state, which is 29.9,” said Surdyka on March 25.

“I was very concerned about the census to start with because when the UMass Donahue Institute analyzed Chicopee’s population, they told us that Chicopee is at risk for undercount compared to the state.”

For every resident who is counted, the city will receive an estimated \$2,372. The money will fund a myriad of projects, all of which will aim to enhance the quality of life in Chicopee.

Surdyka is well aware of the challenges that the current health crisis presents. She credited the Mayor’s Office for lending its support during this time of difficulty.

“We’re trying to do whatever is possible. Chicopee is fortunate that Mayor

[John] Vieau is very committed to increasing census participation. Wherever he goes to a meeting or event, he always speaks about the census,” said Surdyka.

On account of the pandemic, census takers who planned to embark on April 1 are temporarily on hold. When deployed, workers who signed on to make \$19-per-hour will now earn \$22-per-hour.

Surdyka spent countless hours organizing an April campaign to encourage census participation; she voiced disappointment that it will no longer occur and understood why there was no choice.

“We planned on participating in many area events to promote the census,” she said. “We also organized several questionnaire assistance centers; our senior center was going to provide lunches and have people from the state assisting seniors with their responses. The library

was committed to be an assistance center; so was Veterans services, the Valley Opportunity Council and our office. Now, most of those places are closed.”

Despite the setback, Surdyka is still available to residents; she can be reached at 413-594-1550 each week day from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. The Registrar of Voters offers multiple resources, she reassured.

“We still are providing assistance. If people call and give us their number, we will respond for them when they give us consent to do so. If people have questions about who to count, we’re still assisting people that way,” said Surdyka.

The bureau elected not to modify several important dates. On Dec. 31, the appropriate counts are still to be delivered to President Donald Trump. Additionally, states will receive redistricting counts by April 1, 2021.

State Supreme Court issues ruling regarding inmate release

BOSTON – The state’s Supreme Judicial Court issued its ruling on an emergency petition filed by the Committee for Public Counsel Services and the Massachusetts Association of Criminal Defense Lawyers, which sought to immediately release thousands of inmates held on bail and those sentenced over concerns of COVID-19 in jails and prisons across the state.

The April 3 decision, written by Justice Frank Gaziano, acknowledges the urgency of the threat on incarcerated populations but accepts the arguments of some of the respondents, including District Attorneys Blodgett, Cruz, Early, Gulluni, Morrissey, O’Keefe and Quinn. The Court decided that with regard to sentenced inmates, the separation of powers limits its authority and, consequently, the decision maintains the executive branch’s authority over those individuals.

Further, the Court decided that pre-trial detainees, particularly those with health or age factors that place them at higher risk, should be considered for release on an individual and expedited basis at hearings in the Trial Court. Pre-trial detainees who are outside of excluded categories of serious and violent crimes will be ordered released unless it is established that release would result in an unreasonable danger or very high risk of flight.

The Court expressed its view that the system should endeavor to reduce numbers of detainees in light of COVID-19, but that should be done with consideration of public safety, victims’ rights, and the challenges inmates will face upon release.

“We are very appreciative of today’s decision by the Supreme Judicial Court. The Court’s decision contemplates the

seriousness of this crisis for all involved, including victims of crime, our communities, and the health of inmates across the commonwealth,” Hampden District Attorney Anthony Gulluni said. “This decision will allow us to continue thoughtful and careful individual reviews of detainees that has and will continue to reduce inmate populations, without jeopardizing victims of crime or our citizens across the commonwealth.”

District Attorneys Blodgett, Cruz, Early, Gulluni, Morrissey, O’Keefe, and Quinn argued in their brief filed with the Court and in oral arguments that the Supreme Judicial Court’s powers, particularly on sentenced inmates, was limited due to the separation of powers. The District Attorneys also argued that the wholesale release of thousands of pre-trial and sentenced inmates would violate victims’ rights and seriously endanger public safety across the commonwealth. The seven DAs further emphasized that this proposed spontaneous release would not only endanger crime victims and the public, but also the very inmates being released. In this state of emergency, those released would not benefit from the bevy of after-incarceration services typically provided, including medical and substance use care, and would not be supervised by agencies like parole or probation, which provide critical resources and guidance to men and women who re-enter our society after months and years of incarceration.

Instead, the District Attorneys preferred that inmates be considered for release on a case-by-case basis in hearings before judges, who can make individual decisions considering the totality of the circumstances.

Man dies after shooting incident

One man is dead and another in custody following a shooting last week.

At approximately 10:42 a.m. April 1, the Chicopee Police Department and Massachusetts State Police detectives assigned to the Hampden District Attorney’s Office responded to a 911 call for a report of a shooting at 239 Meadow St., according to a press release. Upon arrival, officers located a victim suffering from a gunshot wound.

The victim, identified s Jonathan Ares, 21, of Westfield, was transported to Baystate Medical Center where he later succumbed to his injuries.

Hampden District Attorney Anthony

Gulluni offers his sympathies to the victim’s family.

Aramis Ares, 25, of Springfield has been arrested and charged with manslaughter and carrying a loaded firearm while under the influence. He was arraigned in Chicopee District Court and held on \$250,000 bail.

As of press time, Aramis Ares was scheduled for bail review April 7.

The investigation remains ongoing conducted by the Chicopee Police Department, the Massachusetts State Police Detective Unit assigned to the Hampden District Attorney’s Office and the DA’s Murder Unit.

Athletic Association cancels 2020 events

As a result of the coronavirus pandemic, the Chicopee Athletic Hall of Fame Executive Committee announced April 3 it would cancel this year’s golf tournament and induction ceremony.

The Committee will continue to meet remotely to select the 2020 scholarship

winners and plan next year’s festivities. Nominations already received will be considered for the Class of 2021.

For scholarship applications, visit chicopeeps.org/athletics-call1028 or contact Sean Mackin, director of athletics, at 594-3574 or smackn@cpsge.org.

City reports first COVID-19 death

As cases of the new coronavirus continue to rise, the city of Chicopee now has more than 50 confirmed positive cases, according to the city’s Health Department.

Chicopee Mayor John Vieau announced Friday, April 3, the city also confirmed its first death.

“It is with great sadness that we announce our first death of a resident in Chicopee from COVID-19 virus,” Vieau said. “We extend our deepest sympathies to the loved ones during this time of loss.”

According to a press release, the individual, in her 80s, was a grandmother to a Chicopee first responder. No other information could be released as of press time.

Lisa Sanders, the city’s health director, cautioned residents that there has

been an increase in cases among younger age groups.

“Of the nine most recently confirmed cases, five of them were in their 30s,” she said.

In response to the growing pandemic, the city has increased restrictions throughout the city, limiting access to essential areas only. This includes at local retail stores, playgrounds and basketball courts, and the municipal golf course.

“The severity of this virus means that everyone needs to be looking out for everyone, whether they’re old, young, sick or healthy,” Vieau said. “We must all do what we can do to keep each other safe. ... Now more than ever, each of us must do our part to prevent the spread of this virus in Chicopee.”

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Mayor announces relief on excise, real estate taxes

In response to legislation signed into law by Gov. Charlie Baker, Chicopee Mayor John Vieau announced the extension of the real estate tax bill due date, as well as the waiving of interest and other penalty fees as the result of late payment.

“We are grateful to the legislature for recognizing and acting swiftly to create a bill that helps provide some financial relief for our residents through this unexpected challenge,” Vieau said. “We appreciate Governor Baker taking quick action to adopt this law.”

The city will extend the due date on fourth quarter real estate tax bills, which were due May 1, 2020. With the order, tax bills will now be due June 1, 2020.

This allows for the waiving of payment of interest and other penalty fees in the event of late payment of any excise, tax, betterment, water rate or annual sewer use with a due date on or after March 10 made after its due date but before June 30.

Penalties and interest will be waived through June 30.

Governor issues travel guidance; extends state tax deadline

BOSTON – The Baker-Polito Administration recently announced new COVID-19 public health emergency responses issuing new guidelines on travel and transportation, and offering further support for health care professionals and patients.

Gov. Charlie Baker, Lt. Gov. Karyn Polito, Senate President Karen Spilka and House Speaker Robert DeLeo also announced an agreement to extend the 2019 state individual income tax filing and payment deadline from April 15 to July 15, matching the July 15 deadline for filing federal individual income taxes.

Beginning March 27, all travelers arriving to Massachusetts are instructed to self-quarantine for 14 days. This guidance will be displayed as posters at service plazas along Interstate 90 eastbound, distributed as flyers at major transportation hubs and on posted on highway message boards. Visitors are instructed not to travel to Massachusetts if they are displaying symptoms.

Health care workers, public health workers, public safety workers, transportation workers and designated essential workers are exempt from this requirement.

For more information, visit mass.gov.

BHN introduces ‘TeleCare’ services

SPRINGFIELD – BHN recently introduced a new program, BHNTeleCare, in response to the COVID-19 crisis that will allow individuals to continue counseling sessions with their therapists from the comfort and safety of their own homes.

To respond to the need for social distancing as well as the increase in stress and behavioral health challenges during the COVID-19 crisis, BHN is transitioning service at its 10 counseling and outpatient clinics to remote therapy, providing services via virtual sessions, seven days a week.

For those without access to phone or video technology, BHN’s physical outpatient clinics are operating limited hours to continue providing in-person services during this crisis.

According to Katherine Wilson, president and CEO of BHN, “This innovation in the way we provide therapy and counseling services is groundbreaking and allows us to render services where people are. This is particularly critical as a result of the needs that have emerged due to the spread of COVID-19. It allows a counseling avenue for those suffering anxiety and in need of support during this time of crisis affecting individuals and families.”

For more information or to request an appointment, call 733-1423 or 733-6661.

MAXWELL from page 1

Pandoli attempted to locate the cat’s owner by posting on heavily-trafficked Facebook pages such as the “Massachusetts Lost Pet Locator Public Group” and “Chicopee Area Community Forum.”

After the endeavor was unsuccessful, Pandoli contacted the Thomas J. O’Connor Animal Control & Adoption Center, which operates in Springfield, Chicopee and Holyoke. TJO could not identify the cat’s owners either as no microchip was found present in its body.

“I didn’t want this cat to be put back out in the street so they agreed to release him to my back porch. The first couple days didn’t go too well,” said Pandoli. “I couldn’t open up the door to my back porch; this cat was hissing and spitting and wanted to go outside. Experts say that these cats who are considered feral are unadoptable; they’ve been outside for so long that they’re wild and don’t trust humans.”

Slowly, the two formed a bond. Pandoli named the cat “Maxwell Edison” and created a Facebook page, “The Journey of Maxwell Edison,” to post his growth. Maxwell became a citywide sensation overnight; the page now has over 1,000 followers.

Pandoli capitalized on the page’s popularity by fundraising in support of TJO and the resources that the nonprofit organization provides to animals that are in need.

With the assistance of his niece, Erica Dulude, Pandoli recently completed an initiative that impacted the local animal community in a way that he had never foreseen.

“My niece had designed a T-shirt based on a picture [of Maxwell] that I posted and she gave it to me as a present. Then, she ended up organizing the entire fundraiser. We sold 50 T-shirts, and there were countless donations. We raised over \$1,200 for TJO,” said Pandoli.

As a result of the fundraiser, TJO informed Pandoli that it will consider opening a room at its Springfield-based shelter that is dedicated to nursing feral cats.

“It will be a special room where people realize that these aren’t lap cats that will let you scratch your chin. They’re cats that need to be brought through the process of trusting humans again. They’re going to call it the ‘Maxwell Edison Room,’” said Pandoli.

Today, Maxwell and Pandoli are celebrating their 50th day together. The two have grown close; Maxwell recently began sleeping on Pandoli’s bed.

Pandoli believes that the experience of adopting and aiding Maxwell has changed him for the better. He further explained his sentiment.

“The cool thing about it is that there’s hundreds of people who are sharing stories that they’ve had with feral cats that they’ve taken in. I’ve gotten a lot of tips and taken a lot of advice from people who are sharing interest in Maxwell’s journey. There are a lot of people out there who really care for cats. It’s pretty amazing,” said Pandoli.

TDI from page 1

that was created over the past couple of years between the city, the Chamber of Commerce and MassDevelopment’s TDI program. Andrea and I are excellent partners; we have a very like-minded approach to development and communication,” said Copoulos.

The Chicopee Chamber has been in frequent communication with local and state officials. On multiple occasions, Copoulos has spoken with Mike Kennealy, the state’s secretary of Housing and Economic Development.

“The government is doing everything in its power to resolve and create opportunities from this crisis,” she said. “I think the magnitude of the need right now is huge, and I think that everybody on the federal level is struggling with how to create quick programming and match resources with need.”

Ordinarily, the Chamber operates primarily to serve its members; in the midst of the pandemic, however, the organization is “here to support business in Chicopee in general.”

Copoulos urged residents to be patient, an action that is easier said than done at the moment. She is optimistic that they will embrace the bigger picture.

“It’s certainly a challenging time for the business community. The action that we’ve had to take is to suppress our economy,” she said. “Right now, unfortunately, while it’s one of the hardest times to be patient, being patient and waiting for some of these systems to unfold is what’s necessary.”

BUSINESS



Turley Publications is liberal with regard to its business coverage policies, but we do have some standards folks need to understand. First, local businesses and merchants are just as much institutions in our towns as the library and schools. Without them, there are no towns.

We will feature coverage of local businesses that are new, have a major expansion, moving, closing, under new management or ownership, celebrating a milestone anniversary, or have been thrust into the news realm. Merchants can request that coverage through the editor, or for our existing advertising clients, through their ad representatives.

For more information on business coverage for The Chicopee Register, please email chicopeeregister@turley.com.

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CLUES ACROSS

1. Canadian law enforcers

5. Actor Idris

9. Cut or bruise

11. Vegetables

13. Aircraft delivery

15. To make obsolete

16. Things similar to those already noted

17. Columbus is a famous one

19. Age group

21. Denotes nature of sound

22. Klutz

23. Uninteresting

25. Computer manufacturer

26. 2,000 lbs.

27. Genus of seabirds

29. Emerges

31. Baseball stat

33. Witnesses

34. Observed

36. Satisfy

38. Former OSS

39. Small Eurasian deer

41. Wife of Sparta's king

43. Ballplayer accessory

44. Temporary cessation of breathing

46. Where construction workers ply their trade

48. Arguments that justify a religious doctrine

52. Thick cloud of tiny water droplets

53. Widens

54. Detection

56. Period of inactivity

57. Tomato and vodka are two

58. Greek war god

59. Urinates

CLUES DOWN

1. Churned

2. Seal bottles

3. Million barrels per day (abbr.)

4. Meat from a pig (French)

5. Within

6. Walk in a slow pace

7. Cries

8. About Andes

9. Fishermen use it

10. Expresses delight

11. Shouts

12. Feudal agricultural laborer

14. Sailboat

15. Small Eurasian willows

18. S. American native people

20. Extreme disgust

24. Nonsense (slang)

26. Produce male reproductive cells

28. Computes

30. Pop singer

32. Weds secretly

34. Having two poles

35. Yankee hero Bucky

37. Building

38. Per __, each

40. Six (Spanish)

42. Makes amends

43. Scoundrels

45. Baseball's best pitchers

47. Some are scrambled

49. Emit coherent radiation

50. Singer Redding

51. Break

55. Institute legal proceedings against

CROSSWORD SOLUTION ON PAGE 8

Valley Press Club scholarship applications due April 17

SPRINGFIELD – The Valley Press Club will award up to six \$1,000 scholarships to high school seniors in Western Massachusetts and northern Connecticut pursuing a career in journalism.

The Valley Press Club Scholarships, funded by contributions and dues to the Press Club, are for students planning careers in print, online or broadcast journalism.

The Republican Scholarship, funded by The Republican newspaper and administered by the club, is for students living within the newspaper’s circulation area who are planning careers in print journalism.

The 22News Scholarship, funded by WWLP-22News and administered by the club, is for students planning careers in broadcast journalism.

The Edward J. Malley Jr. Memorial Scholarship, established in memory of a chief photographer for the Springfield Newspapers, is for students planning careers in photojournalism.

The Rhonda Swan Memorial Scholarship, established in memory of the award-winning journalist, editor and au-

thor, is for students who are underrepresented, in the Springfield area, planning careers in journalism.

The Al Jaffe Scholarship, funded by Mr. Jaffe, the Valley Press Club’s first scholarship recipient in 1964, who retired in 2015 as vice president of talent negotiation and production recruitment at ESPN, is for students planning careers in broadcast journalism or sports journalism.

Primary emphasis is placed on career goals, writing ability, scholastic aptitude and overall achievement as measured by an applicant’s high school transcript, class rank, academic awards, SAT scores and extracurricular activities.

Scholarship applications are available at www.ValleyPressClub.com, high school guidance offices, or by emailing NTassinari@TheBigE.com.

Applications may be sent by mail to Noreen Tassinari, VPC Scholarship Chair, Eastern States Exposition, 1305 Memorial Ave., West Springfield, MA 01089 or electronically to NTassinari@TheBigE.com. The deadline for submissions is April 17.

Max Cares Foundation extends scholarship deadline

HARTFORD, Conn. – Max Cares Foundation Inc. announced a deadline extension for the charitable organization’s scholarships for students looking to attend or who currently attend a culinary arts or hospitality school.

The application is available online at www.maxcaresfoundation.org/scholarships. The deadline for application, originally announced for April 1, has been extended to May 1, 2020.

Up to \$20,000 in scholarships are awarded annually, double the amount provided last year. The maximum scholarship grant also doubled to \$5,000 over previous scholarships. In 2019, four students from the Greater Hartford and

Greater Springfield communities were provided scholarships.

Applicants must be a Greater Hartford or Greater Springfield high school senior in good standing, eligible for graduation the same year as the scholarship application and seeking to earn a secondary degree in Culinary Arts or Hospitality oriented program. Students may also be currently enrolled in a secondary culinary arts or hospitality-oriented program. Previous MCF scholarship recipients who are continuing their education are able to reapply.

The application and additional information can be found online at www.maxcaresfoundation.org/scholarships.

Advertising Club seeks entries for 2020 Creative Awards; deadline May 1

SPRINGFIELD – The Advertising Club of Western Massachusetts announced the 2020 Creative Awards season is now underway, accepting submissions for the annual celebration of exceptional advertising, design and creative work throughout the region.

Illustrators, videographers, strategists, designers, copywriters and photographers are welcome to enter and kick-off a new decade of creative work in Western Mass. The submission deadline is Friday, May 1.

This year’s competition features

several changes. Among these changes, physical submissions are optional, and the club will utilize a new submission platform with Judgify. Cost is \$40 per entry for Ad Club members (\$80 for non-members), and \$20 per entry for students with a valid student ID.

Winners will be celebrated at an awards gala Thursday, May 21 at Union Station, 125 Pleasant St. Northampton, beginning at 6 p.m. Tickets will be available soon.

For more information or to enter, visit adclubwm.org/events/creativeawards2020/.

FACES AND PLACES

Chicopee anglers recognized with gold pins

The Division of Fisheries and Wildlife recently named this year’s gold pin winners for catching the largest fish in each species in 2019.

Justin Rivera, of Chicopee, received the Youth Catch and Keep gold pin for landing a 3-pound 15-ounce shad in the Connecticut River in South Hadley. Chicopee’s John Dion received the Catch and Release gold pin for catching a 12.5-inch sunfish in Norwich Pond in

Huntington.

All anglers who meet the minimum weight requirements and send MassWildlife the necessary supporting documentation for each species receive a bronze pin. At the end of the year, those who caught the largest fish in each species receive a gold pin.

For more information about the Sportfishing Awards program, visit www.mass.gov/masswildlife.



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Chicopee Register

Chicopee student volunteers during spring break

WORCESTER – Zacharay Dubreuil, of Chicopee, recently participated in a week-long service immersion trip through Assumption College’s SEND program during spring break during the week of March 9.

Dubreuil was a member of a team that traveled to Washington, D.C. working with City Service Mission, which partners

with ministries and organizations making a difference in their communities. Through CSM-D.C., students had the opportunity to learn about the country’s history while serving those in need, volunteering at such locations as food banks, churches and assisting senior citizens and those experiencing homelessness.



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PROTECT YOURSELF AND OTHERS AGAINST INFECTIONS



1

WET HANDS



2

APPLY SOAP



3

RUB HANDS
PALM TO PALM



4

LATHER THE BACKS
OF YOUR HANDS



5

SCRUB
BETWEEN YOUR FINGERS



6

RUB THE BACKS
OF FINGERS ON
THE OPPOSING PALMS



7

CLEAN THUMBS



8

WASH FINGERNAILS
AND FINGERTIPS



9

RINSE HANDS



10

DRY WITH
A SINGLE USE TOWEL



11

USE THE TOWEL
TO TURN OFF THE FAUCET



12

YOUR HANDS ARE CLEAN

Please thoroughly wash your hands to

keep us healthy!

SOCIAL SECURITY MATTERS

Using IRA instead of claiming SS; disability appeal

By Russell Gloor
Guest Columnist

Dear Rusty: I am currently unemployed and drawing funds from my IRA. I am 62-years-old. My financial adviser instructed me to not take Social Security because once I do that the percentage of increase would stop. He said to wait until the benefits increased to the point where I could then take Social Security and leave my IRA alone. Does that seem right? Also, I have applied for SS Disability benefits and have been rejected, but I am currently appealing that decision. Is my next step a lawyer? If so do you have any recommendations? Signed: Befuddled

Dear Befuddled: If you take your Social Security benefits at age 62, your payment will be cut by about 27.5 percent from what it would be at your full retirement age of 66 ½. If you wait, your SS payment when you claim it will have grown for each month you delay. You only get 100 percent of the SS benefit you have earned from a lifetime of working when you reach your full retirement age. The rate of benefit growth before you reach your FRA is a bit more than 6 percent for each year you wait, so I expect that your financial advisor compared that guaranteed growth to the interest you are receiving on your IRA and concluded that waiting to claim a higher SS benefit for the rest of your life is a better deal. Provided you are in good health, that seems like a prudent suggestion. And just so you are aware, if you delay claiming SS beyond your FRA, you'll earn an additional 8 percent for each year you further delay, up to age 70 when your SS benefit would be about 75 percent more than it will be if you take it now.

Regarding your disability appeal, I cannot recommend a specific attorney, but I suggest you seek one who specializes in Social Security Disability Insurance claims. SSDI attorneys must adhere to federal law and they are limited in what they can charge you. Usually that limit is 25 percent of whatever back SSDI benefits they can secure for you (paid from those back benefits) to a maximum of \$6,000. There should be no charge for an initial consultation and you shouldn't be required to pay anything unless they win your case for you. The easiest way to find someone to assist you is to do a search for "SSDI attorneys near me" and then do some initial research on your search results before selecting. You'll be able to judge the strength of your SSDI appeal by whether the SSDI attorney accepts your case – they'll only accept your case if they believe they can win and be compensated for their efforts. Only you can judge if engaging an attorney is a wise idea at this point. You still have multiple SSDI appeal levels available to you, and an SSDI attorney can be engaged at any point you choose.

Russell Gloor is a certified Social Security adviser through the Association of Mature American Citizens. This column is intended for information purposes only and does not represent legal or financial guidance. It presents the opinions and interpretations of the AMAC Foundation's staff, trained and accredited by the National Social Security Association. NSSA and the AMAC Foundation and its staff are not affiliated with or endorsed by the Social Security Administration or any other governmental entity. To submit a question, visit amacfoundation.org/programs/social-security-advisory or email ssadviser@amacfoundation.org.



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GUEST COLUMN

Joan E. B. Coombs



Bringing 'Comfort' and 'Mercy'

Good news gladdens our heart. It brightens our day; it renews our spirit. Today that good news is within your grasp. Words will try to relay the "geysers of goodness" that are springing up as people unite locally and globally bringing comfort and mercy.

One may wonder, "But, where's comfort and mercy in this COVID-19 pandemic?"

Comfort arrived as millions of heroic acts — seen and unseen — happened when people of all ages, races, and creeds responded to help with humanitarian needs.

"Where did we see that?"

See where our well-being, health and safety including our educational, vocational, and industrial pursuits were of utmost concerns when safety measures were started to "Cease the Spread of the COVID-19" virus. Look where our local, state,

and nation-wide governing and presidential authorities announced that schools, colleges, non-essential businesses, entertainment venues must close, and that "social distancing" would save lives.

Within days, across our United States, millions of homebound students and adults were in homeschooling, and online educational classes.

"And, how did that happen?"

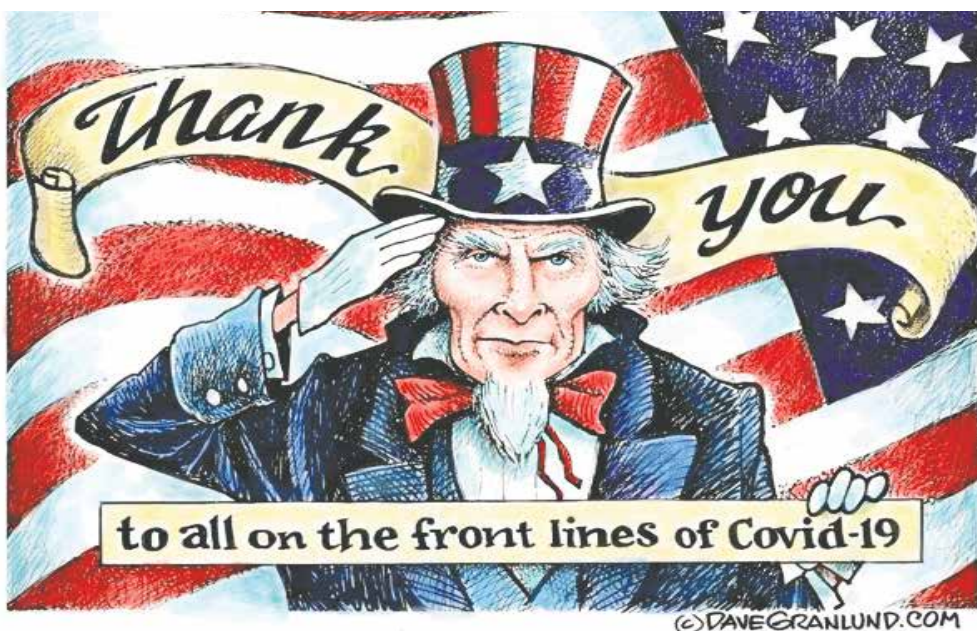
Behind the scenes multitudes of Internet personnel and providers made sure that millions of computers, cellphones, and all forms of media and communication services would keep the public informed and updated as possible. These critical messaging systems also kept financial institutions and industries conversant as to how the coming economic crises would be managed.

"That's good news. Where's comfort and mercy?"

Comfort and mercy arrived as a life-threatening virus began spreading from shore to shore, country to country and to global continents. Support came from dedicated custodial staffs to diligent medical teams working inside buildings and hospitals. Aid arrived with the military helping patrolling state troopers, police and Emergency Medical Teams and fire personnel "Ready to roll" when and wherever needed-as much as humanly possible.

Acts of caring and compassion sprang into action. Anywhere. Everywhere. People sensed a new, deeper, keener responsibility for a child, an at-risk senior, a lonely neighbor, single parents, the homeless, and the urgent increase of community needs. Country-wide and globally houses of worship streamlined the Good News through internet services, or

See **COMFORT** page 7



LETTER TO THE EDITOR

Think twice about giving Easter bunnies

To the editor:

As Easter 2020 approaches amidst the COVID-19 pandemic spreading throughout the world, I thought it'd be a good time to share my thoughts about the link between rabbits, Easter and COVID-19.

As current president of the House Rabbit Connection Inc. in Springfield, a nonprofit domestic rabbit rescue, I can't stress enough about why rabbits or other live animals should never be given to children as an Easter/birthday/holiday gift.

Rabbits are very delicate creatures and do not like being picked up or held. Children often man-handle rabbits to the point where they might scratch and/or bite the child when the bunny wants to get down.

They, as any other pet animal, are life-long family members and not "beginner" pets as many would believe.

Rabbits need to chew to keep their teeth trimmed. That means your computer cord, your wood trim, furniture, and carpets and rugs etc. can all fall prey to satisfying your bunnies natural instinct to chew.

And in these days of coronavirus many veterinarians have drastically cut their hours to eliminate or reduce the opportunity to expose the public and staff to potential COVID-19.

That means if your bunny, dog, cat or bird needs veterinary care while this virus is affecting so many worldwide, chances are it may be difficult to get an appointment for them and get the medical attention they need.

In conclusion: please hold off on adopting or buying a bunny for your family (as well as any other pet) during this coronavirus pandemic especially as an Easter gift.

Be vigilant about keeping yourself and your family safe and healthy.

Once this pandemic passes ... and who knows when that'll be ... there will be plenty of time to contact a reputable animal rescue to be matched with your perfect furr-ever pet.

Marlene Wilhelm
President- House Rabbit Connection, Inc.
Springfield

WE CARE ABOUT YOUR NEWS!

The *Chicopee Register* welcomes submissions of news in or related to Chicopee and its residents. Our "People News," is filled with submitted engagement announcements, wedding announcements, birth announcements, your new baby or news about your 25th or 50th anniversary celebrations. Please e-mail correspondence along with a photo to chicopeeregister@turley.com or send it to: Chicopee Register, c/o Turley Publications, 24 Water Street, Palmer, MA 01069.

Chicopee Register

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COMFORT from page 6

were permitted to have parking lot services wearing face masks, gloves, using microphones for sermons and music — while keeping rules of “social distancing.”

Restaurant and school kitchen staffs began supplying student meals. Charitable kitchens stirred up meals for the needy. Fabric stores donated materials for masks for each drive-by, pick-up seamstress. Face-mask patterns covered the internet. Sewing machines had adults and youth “in stitches!” Colorful hospital masks were shared, collected and delivered to medical centers. Breweries converted to bottling hand sanitizers. Car manufacturers started producing ventilators. When restaurants closed, food pick-up services expanded. Drive-up and drive-thru windows efficiently and deliciously served hot meals to hungry and thankful people.

Comfort and mercy arrived and helped mitigation in countless cou-

rageous, non-stop, 24/7 day and night shifts by air, land and sea workers with life-challenging situations. As days unfold, heroic helpers and grace agents are amazingly evident and will increase. Throughout global areas, psychological and physical relief will especially be experienced by patients, providers, researchers in the sciences and medical fields as antidotes, therapies and vaccines are discovered and proven safe enough to use and save lives.

Good news also arrived when the United States Navy Ship Comfort sailed into New York City Harbor and the USNS Mercy navigated into the Los Angeles, California port. Both are “Mercy-class” hospital ships named for the virtue mercy. Each ship is fully staffed and equipped to provide acute medical and surgical services with 1,000 beds for patient care.

Good news gladdens our hearts. May it continue bringing comfort and mercy.

Natural Easter egg dyes and floral lore

We are looking forward to coloring eggs later this week! My oldest daughter has been caught up in learning about her Polish ancestors so I thought it would be fun to follow my mother’s family tradition of dyeing eggs with onion skins. I remember her taking a large pot and packing it with the outer, papery skins of either red or yellow onions. The more skins in the pot, the more intensely colored the eggs would be. Some people would even save skins a month prior to Easter just to have enough!

With the skins in the pot, she would then add the raw eggs with just enough water to cover them. After boiling for several minutes the eggs would be colored shades of maroon or brown. Where the eggs rested against the skins there would even be an imprint left behind. If you find that you like this mottled look better than the plain background color, wrap the eggs in the skins and secure them with rubber bands prior to boiling for an even more exaggerated appearance. Polish them with a bit of vegetable oil on a clean cloth and they will be shiny enough to use in all sorts of creative table decorations. Incidentally, the eggs aren’t flavored “onion” and are completely edible, although you may find them



IN THE GARDEN
Roberta McQuaid
Columnist

far too pretty to crack and eat!

Using natural dyes is trendy right now, and may even be used out of necessity when coloring eggs this year. Although I have never tried these natural egg dyeing materials, you might have fun experimenting with them on your own. Follow the directions above but replace the onion skins with beets or frozen raspberries for pale red eggs. Carrot tops or the spice tumeric are said to impart a light yellow dye, whereas spinach leaves will leave your eggs pale green in color. Blueberries or red cabbage leaves can be used to make a bluish tint. A teaspoon of vinegar (more for a large batch) added to the pot will set the color.

Easter lilies decorating the altar will be one thing missed this year. While we can witness the beauty televised, it will be hard to conjure up that smell, that glorious smell! Lore has it that lilies sprung from the ground, marking where Christ’s drops of sweat had fallen in his final moments of agony. It has also been said that lilies were found growing in the Garden of Gethsemane, and for that reason are sometimes called “white-robed apostles of hope.” They are mentioned numerous times in the Bible, perhaps most memorably in the Sermon on the Mount,

where Christ said to his followers: “Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow: they toil not, neither do they spin; and yet...Solomon and all of his glory was not arrayed like one of these.” Emblems of new life, hope and beauty, fragrant Easter lilies decorate churches en masse during the Easter season.

You can keep an Easter lily alive long past the holiday. After the individual flowers have withered, remove them from the plant. The process of “deadheading” will direct energy away from seed production and back to the bulb below. Don’t cut away the foliage, however, leave it intact as long as it is green. Once the weather has warmed, pick a sunny, well-drained spot in the garden and sink the bulb three inches below the soil surface. Don’t expect it to flower again this season, or even next March or April. Easter lily growers force the plant into bloom for the holiday; without manipulation it will flower naturally during the summer months.

Roberta McQuaid graduated from the Stockbridge School of Agriculture at the University of Massachusetts. For the last 28 years, she has held the position of staff horticulturalist at Old Sturbridge Village. She enjoys growing food as well as flowers. Have a question for her? Email it to ekennedy@turley.com with “Gardening Question” in the subject line.

Letters to the Editor

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Cannabis community fights to bring back recreational sales

By Dalton Zbierski
Staff Writer

And just like that, it's gone. In the wake of the pandemic, Gov. Charlie Baker opted to indefinitely halt the sale of adult use marijuana, designating the industry as non-essential. Medical sales are permitted, and dispensaries can still serve card holders, but the cannabis community is critical of Baker's decision regarding recreational sales. "There's a lot of questions right now around the importance of adult use as an essential service, said Amanda Rositano, president of NETA, a leading cannabis retailer operating out of Northampton and Brookline. "We have seen that many [recreational marijuana] customers are raising this question as to why package stores are considered essential, why pharmacies are considered essential, grocery stores are considered essential but adult use cannabis is not?" said Rositano. There's a reason that leaders of the cannabis industry are voicing disapproval. Without recreational marijuana, consumers

will be likely return to buying "unregulated, illicit market products." Beyond those concerns, Rositano outlined a bigger problem. "It's important to understand that many of our customers that are coming in to purchase adult use cannabis are doing so to provide themselves with relief for medical conditions," she said. "Many symptoms are exasperated by the COVID-19 crisis, whether that's anxiety, pain, sleeplessness; it's a really important product for many people." NETA has shifted to the "reserve ahead" model to best ensure the safety of medical patrons and dispensary employees. Customers order ahead, and the medical marijuana is ready for pick-up upon arrival. Rositano credits the state's Cannabis Control Commission for quickly implementing changes that have enhanced the safety and speed of transactions, essentially allowing dispensaries to stay on their feet. Theory Wellness is a recreational marijuana dispensary that operates retail facilities in Chicopee



STAFF PHOTO BY DALTON ZBIERSKI

Signs outside of NETA in Northampton direct medical marijuana patients to maintain social distancing when making purchases at the Conz Street facility. Marijuana retailers are only open for medical sales during the coronavirus pandemic.

and Great Barrington offers pre-order and curbside pickup at each location. Thomas Winstanley, the director of marketing at Theory Wellness, noted that it's imperative that all dispensaries prioritize safety. In the midst of the outbreak, he explained why one can still trust the marijuana that is distributed at dispensaries. "First and foremost, you have to realize that when somebody actually touches that flower that they buy at our store, they're the first human

hands to touch that product. Every step of our cultivation process, all the way until the front end retail, nobody's handling or touching the product," said Winstanley. NETA and Theory Wellness are following protocols established by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, and have implemented social distancing guidelines to protect employees and customers. Both operations are engaged in frequent discussions with their host communities.



FILE PHOTO

Theory Wellness in Chicopee remains open for medical sales during the coronavirus pandemic. The shop owners, along with others throughout the state, are fighting to bring back adult-use sales, hoping to be treated like liquor stores.

Rosita complimented the cannabis community, noting that it has "really banded together not only to operate safely in this environment but to share best practices and really ensure that we're setting a standard for not just individual operators but for the industry as a whole." Both dispensaries are collaborating with members of the Massachusetts Cannabis Business Association in an effort to produce hand sanitizer for front line medical personnel. "We are voluntarily producing and donating thousands of gallons of hand-sanitizer in our production facilities with permission from the state to be able to donate that product to medical facilities across the state," said Rositano. Watching industry rivals band together for a common cause, Winstanley praised the bonds that have been forged between different in-state dispensaries. "One of the positives if there were some silver lining in all of this is that it's bringing people together to help support one another. I think that's what we need," he said. "We all know that we're all in this together, and that's a sentiment that we haven't quite had at this level. We're seeing it now."

Annual Press Club Roast postponed until fall 2020

SPRINGFIELD – The Valley Press Club's Board of Directors decided March 17 to postpone the May 8 Valley Press Club Roast to the fall due to the effects of the new coronavirus. The Roast, which features humorous sketches about public officials as a fundraiser for the club's scholarships to journalism students, is usually held in the spring at the John Boyle O'Reilly Club in Springfield. Tony Cignoli, noted national political consultant, was to be the emcee. Numerous local politicians, including area mayors, city councilors and state legislators were expected to attend. The Roast is similar to the White House Correspondent's dinner in Washington, D.C. that uses humor to bring both the media and newsmakers together. Peter Goonan, reporter of the Republican is the chairman of the event. The Valley Press Club, founded in 1960, consists of active and retired journalists and marketing/public relations professionals. For more information or to become a member, visit valleypressclub.com.

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Sports

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COMMUNITY

PVIAC hopes to keep sectional tournament going

By Gregory A. Scibelli
gscibelli@turley.com

REGION – While the state will move toward implementing a statewide tournament in the fall of 2021, at least one section plans to attempt to have its own tournament.

The Pioneer Valley Inter-scholastic Athletic Conference, the governing body of the sports played by schools in Western Massachusetts, has confirmed it will seek to have its own tournament, likely to be built into the regular season.

David Stratton, athletic director of Agawam High School, and a member of the PVIAC Board of Directors, said his board is going to pursue options to hold a similar sectional tournament for most sports.

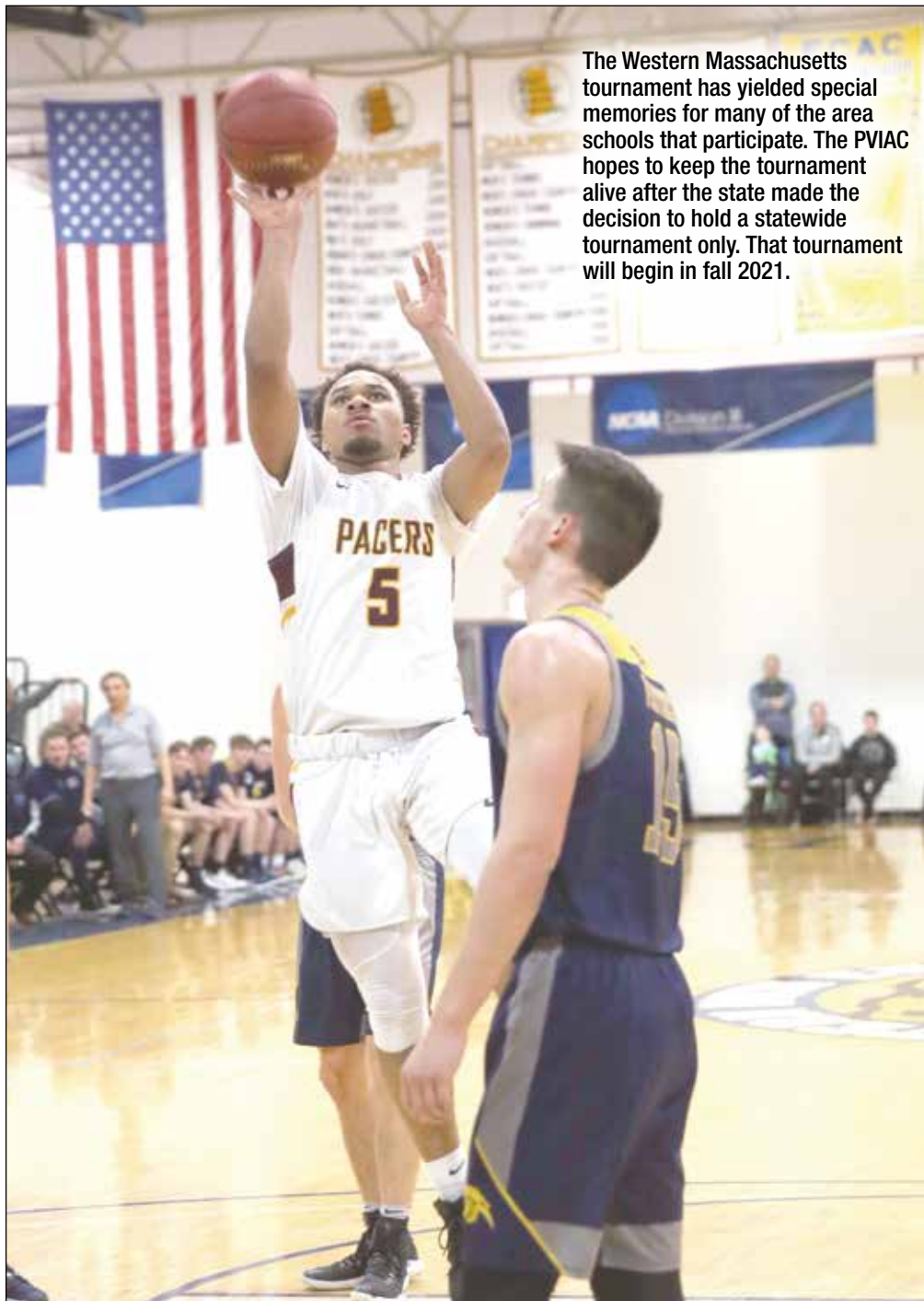
Lou Conte, a former athletic director at Agawam, and the PVIAC's Executive Secretary, said the PVIAC is working on gathering as much information as possible to propose what a tournament would look like.

"We have experience having tournaments," said Conte. "We do one for indoor track, outdoor track, and cross country. But we have not done them with the team sports. We would have to see how the logistics would work out."

Among the more popular tournaments are fall tournaments for soccer and the winter tournament for basketball to name Western Mass. champions in those respective sports. Stratton believes the region still deserves to have a tournament.

"The tournament has al-

See **TOURNAMENT** page 10



The Western Massachusetts tournament has yielded special memories for many of the area schools that participate. The PVIAC hopes to keep the tournament alive after the state made the decision to hold a statewide tournament only. That tournament will begin in fall 2021.



FILE PHOTOS



MIAA

MIAA board still hopes to have sectional tournaments

By Gregory A. Scibelli
gscibelli@turley.com

The Massachusetts Interscholastic Athletic Association still seems hopeful of having a spring season as well as a spring tournament after "going back on its decision."

In a vote held in mid-March, the Board of Directors voted that it would cancel tournament play if the start date for spring sports was delayed past April 27.

When Gov. Charlie Baker announced on March 25 that the closure of schools, non-essential businesses, and a general stay-at-home advisory would extend until May 4, the MIAA and its board knew it would obviously

be unable to start practices prior to that May 4.

The board then met again on March 30, agreeing that that the season can begin no earlier than May 4.

However, in a surprise turn, the board did not follow through on its decision to cancel tournaments. Instead, the season was extended from June 20 to June 27 (or June 28 pending weather and facility needs). That vote was a unanimous 19-0 decision.

This means if Massachusetts is able to re-open schools and allow high school sports to commence, there will still be a tournament.

However, one caveat that is still in play is an ironic one.

If there is a tournament, the tournament will only be the four individual sectional tournaments held. There will be no state tournament. A little more than a month ago, the state's schools voted to go to a statewide tournament rather than have sectional tournaments, with the four sectional champions facing off in a state tournament.

A few other votes took place at the March 30 meeting, which was held by teleconference, much like the last few meetings of the MIAA BOD. The board is still requiring seven days from the first day of practice before games can be played. This

See **MIAA** page 10

GOLF

Early golf season derailed by coronavirus closures

By Gregory A. Scibelli
gscibelli@turley.com

REGION – Sports have become non-existent since the coronavirus took over daily life in Massachusetts and the entire country.

But for a while, there was one sport many people could turn to: golf.

Golf could have been a beautiful activity given that it lends itself to social distancing and does not involve too many people in the same place at the same time.

But social distancing was not enough, and Gov. Charlie Baker closed all non-essential businesses and issued the stay-at-home advisory, which is now

extended until May 4.

Unfortunately for some golf courses, they had to close up shop after it appeared an early spring was going to allow for people to get some rounds in.

Cold Spring Country Club in Belchertown opened up on March 9. David Wright said the course opened and remained open for a couple of weeks. But the non-essential business closure made by Baker cut the early season short and Wright said the course has been closed on March 20.

"A small maintenance crew will be starting part time on Monday, April 6 and will be doing just the minimum to keep

See **GOLF** page 10

Registrations piling in for start of Modified season

SEEKONK – The COVID-19 pandemic may have delayed the start of the Tri Track Open Modified Series season, but the list of entered drivers and car owners for 2020 continues to grow just over a month before the drop of the first scheduled green flag.

For those who haven't seen, the start of the season has been delayed until May 9 at Monadnock Speedway -- but that date is fluid, depending on how the pandemic develops. As of this writing, the entire schedule remains in place, with Monadnock on May 9 and Claremont Speedway on May 24th opening the season.

"We're still on target for May 9 as of now," Wayne Darling, one of two Managing Partner's for the Tri Track Open Modified Series, said. "Our registrations are growing daily -- with some stout talent lined up to compete for a large purse. We also want to remind everyone about the Pepsi Challenge, which will pay heat race winners in 2020."

A former series champion and countless winners are on the current entry list -- one filled with talent from top to bottom. Defending series champion Ronnie Williams is looking to repeat in 2020, with car owner Gary Casella, as the combination comes back fired up and ready for more. They were able to visit Victory Lane at Seekonk Speedway last year as part of the \$10,000 to win Open Wheel Wednesday before earning their crown.

Ron Silk and Chase Dowling, two drivers who earned victories last year, are both back with the same team. Silk teams with Bob Horn, as Dowling teams

with Jimmy Paige. The NASCAR Whelen Modified Tour is also well represented.

Matt Swanson, who drives for the historic Boehler Racing on the tour, will drive for Larry Westgate in a car prepared by Boehler Racing, carrying the famed 'Ole Blue' colors. Woody Pitkat, who is back teaming with Stan Mertz, returns to wheel the No. 6, while former NASCAR Modified Tour Rookie of the year Calvin Carroll returns to Tri Track for another round.

On the veteran front, Kirk Alexander, Les Hinckley and Tommy Barrett are coming back.

Weekly SK Modified racers from Stafford Speedway set to compete with Tri Track in 2020 include Matt Galko and Andrew Molleur, one of many upcoming Modified stars. Mike Willis, who earned his first Tri Track win last year at his home track of Claremont, is coming back, this time with car owner Cam McDermott. Rising stars Ryan Doucette, Dylan Izzo, Brian Robie and Derek Robbie are also on the list.

Additional entries include Jim Gavek, Andrew Charron, Carl Medeiros Jr., Matt Kimball and Austin Kochenash. Look for car owner Rick Kluth to unload a car with a new number, No. 44, with a driver TBA.

For more information on the Tri Track Open Modified Series, follow the series on the web at tritrackmodifieds.com and on social media, including Facebook and Instagram. Any additional updates regarding the schedule will be released when available.

MIAA from page 9

means that no actual contests can take place before May 11.

Under the rules set up at the March 24 board meeting, schools will play between eight and 12 actual contests. This will be the case for baseball, softball, boys and girls lacrosse, tennis, and boys volleyball. To qualify for tournament, a team must have at least eight contests. There are typically between 16 and 20 contests for most sports, though tennis sometimes ranges between 14 and 20 contests for an individual school.

The new cutoff date for regular season contests will be June 12 with seeding occurring on June 13. Tournaments would

begin on June 15.

Additionally, the board tasked the Tournament Management Committee, which has been working closely with the Board of Directors, with coming up with a tournament structure to be submitted to the board for April 9.

A future board meeting has not been scheduled, but board meetings have been called each time new guidance has been put out by the state government.

Current CDC guidelines and federal advisories limit interaction to groups of no more than 10 people. It is possible, depending on how rigorously the guidelines are relaxed, that athletes are able to play sports the remainder of the spring, but they could have to do so without any crowds present.

Valley Wheel Baseball looking for new players for 2020 season

REGION – The Valley Wheel Over-30 Baseball League is seeking new players for the upcoming 2020 season. The league is seeking players ages 28 and up. Players turning 28 this year are eligible. However, only players 30 and older can pitch. The league plays 15 regular season games with games being held mostly on Sundays with a couple of weekday games thrown in the mix as well as a special Mother's Day Saturday game in early May. However, due to the current circumstances, the league schedule has been pushed back. The league still plans

to play its season once bans on gatherings are lifted. The league is built on comradery, fair play, and having a good time with friends. If interested in trying out, go to www.valleywheelbaseball.com. The rules of the league and new player forms can be found on the site. For further information, you can contact the league's commissioner, Jim Nason at wheel12@comcast.net or call him at (413) 433-4308. Tryouts will be taking place in the early weeks of April, weather permitting, with a draft following the tryouts.

Sign-ups ongoing for Quabbin Valley Over-30 Baseball League

REGION – The Quabbin Valley Over-30 Baseball League is seeking new players for 2020 season. The league has six teams, several with open roster spots. Last year, the league voted to allow players age 28 and 29 to be able to join the league, though players under 30 are not eligible to pitch. The cost of the league this season is \$192. For returning players, sign-ups are extended through May 1. New players can also sign up through this date with the draft currently set for May

2. The league hopes to begin play in early June. The season is 15 regular season games plus at least one playoff game. A modified schedule is being worked on by league officials. Games are nine innings and metal (BBCOR -3) or wood bats are allowed. Fields locations are throughout Western Mass. For more information on the league, or if you are interested in registering, go to <https://www.quabbin-valleybaseball.org/>. The league is also in Facebook.

TOURNAMENT from page 9

ways been important to the schools, and to the kids," said Stratton. "Our board would like to see us have a sectional tournament still.

Many schools in Western and Central Massachusetts opposed the statewide tournament proposal in a vote taken on Feb. 28 at Assabet Valley Technical High School. The vote saw more than 330 schools participate, with the majority deciding to go with a statewide tournament. More than 100 votes went against the proposal, meaning some Eastern Massachusetts schools voted against it, some feeling the proposal needed more time to develop.

Conte said there are a lot of logistics that will need to be worked out if Western Mass. tournaments are to be continued under the PVIAC umbrella. Among the many logistics to be considered will be how to fund the tournaments. The MIAA helps fund the current tournaments, which include staffing the neutral sites and paying for some venues. One thing working for the PVIAC would be more flexibility in where games could be held.

Western Massachusetts would also have to consider dropping regular season

games in order to find time to hold the tournament. Because the statewide tournaments will be a 32-team bracket, it will be five to six rounds. The sixth round will be a preliminary phases to get .500-qualifying teams an opportunity to make the round of 32.

Current sectional tournaments are typically played over the course of two weeks, with the semifinals and finals of a state tournament between the sectional champions occurring in a third week. All three of those weeks would likely be needed to play new state tournament format, so Stratton said it was likely a week or more would have to be removed from the end of the regular season in order to fit in a sectional tournament. This would lower the number of regular season games played by Western Mass. schools, and could hurt those schools' chances for higher seeds in a state tournament. Fewer games played could result in fewer opportunities for wins, which plays into the MaxPreps formula, which will be used to determine state tournament seeds.

While there is a hold on meetings regarding a sectional tournament during the coronavirus pandemic, the subject will continue to be discussed in the coming months.

GOLF from page 9

the course in shape," said Wright. "We also took out all the tees and markers and placed a sign up saying the course is closed."

Unlike the issues that have had Springfield Mayor Dominic Sarno publicly chiding people for using golf courses in Springfield, places like Cold Spring and Chicopee Country Club have not had issues with intruders using the course on their own.

Since the non-essential business closure, the Alliance of Massachusetts Golf Organizations negotiated with the governor to at least allow courses to begin maintaining the courses. The maintenance factor is crucial, otherwise courses run the risk that the courses will not be

ready at the moment the order is lifted.

Mike O'Neill, representing Chicopee Country Club, said he was very pleased with the ability to keep the course up.

"Being allowed to continue maintenance during those temporary closures ensures the course will be ready for operations in the near future," said O'Neill. "We all share the same goal of returning to recreational normalcy, when clubs can welcome golfers back to the tee."

O'Neill encourages people to heed the advice of state and federal officials to maintain social distancing.

"We ask that the people in the Massachusetts golf community work through this together in a respectful and responsible way by following the protocols of the CDC, WHO, and local health officials," said O'Neill.

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Hospital offers tips for talking with children about COVID-19

SPRINGFIELD – Keep it simple. Stick to the facts.

That’s the word when it comes to calming a child’s fears about what they are hearing about the novel coronavirus pandemic.

“Concern over coronavirus COVID-19 can make children and families anxious. Acknowledging some level of concern, without panicking, is appropriate and can result in taking actions that reduce the risk of illness,” said Dr. Bruce Waslick, chief of child psychiatry at Bay-state Health.

“Helping children cope with anxiety and stress requires being attentive to the child’s emotional needs as much as providing accurate prevention information and facts without causing undue alarm,” he added.

Waslick noted that it is important to remember that children look to adults for guidance on how to react to stressful events.

“If parents seem overly worried, children’s anxiety may rise to the point of being unhealthy. Parents should reassure children that health and school officials are working hard to ensure that people throughout the country stay healthy,” Waslick said.

However, children also need factual, age-appropriate information about the potential seriousness of disease risk and concrete instruction about how to avoid infection and the spread of disease.

“Teaching children positive coping measures, talking with them about their fears and giving them a sense of some control over their risk of infection can

help reduce anxiety,” said Waslick.

Consider the following:

- Remain calm and reassuring: Children will react to and follow your verbal and nonverbal reactions. What you say and do about COVID-19, current prevention efforts, and related events can either increase or decrease your children’s anxiety. Let your children talk about their feelings and help reframe their concerns into the appropriate perspective.
- Make yourself available: Children may need extra attention from you and may want to talk about their concerns, fears, and questions. It is important that they know they have someone who will listen to them – make time for them. Tell them you love them and give them plenty of affection.
- Monitor television viewing and so-

cial media: Limit television viewing or access to sensational information on the Internet and through social media. Try to avoid watching or listening to information that might be upsetting when your children are present.

- Engage your child in games or other interesting activities.
- Maintain a normal routine to the extent possible.
- Be honest and accurate: In the absence of factual information, children often imagine situations far worse than reality. Don’t ignore their concerns, but rather explain that at the present moment very few people in this country are sick with COVID-19.

For more information, visit baystate-health.org/covid19.

PUBLIC NOTICES

SALE OF MOTOR VEHICLES UNDER G.L. c.255 Sec. 39A

Notice is hereby given by Interstate Towing, Inc. pursuant to the provisions of G.L. c. 255, section 39A, that on **April 24, 2020** at **Interstate Towing, Inc** the following Motor Vehicles will be sold at private sale to satisfy our garage keeper’s lien thereon for storage, towing charges, care and expenses of notices and sale of said vehicles.

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Jonathan Kelley/Shawn Walker
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Springfield, MA 01151

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Doris Pessolano
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Springfield, MA 01129

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Damien Dalton
14 Matthews Rd
Southwick, MA 01077

2003 FORD F250 SUPER DUTY
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Colin Clegg
125 Abbey St
South Hadley, MA 01075

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Daniel Lamarier
165 Russell Rd
Westfield, MA 01085

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Susan Fernandez
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Westfield, MA 01085

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Bridgeport, MA 06608

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2011 DODGE AVENGER
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Edward Kendall

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North Brookfield, MA 01535

2013 DODGE DART
VIN: 1C3CDFAA0DD106642
Leslie Greenlaw
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2015 HONDA ACCORD
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Diane Giguier
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4/09, 4/16, 4/23/2020

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2873 GROVE HILL RD
FRANKLINTON, NC 27525

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JULIO OTERO
725 UNION ST APT A
SPRINGFIELD, MA 01109

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267 S 2ND ST
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Commonwealth of Massachusetts The Trial Court Hampden Probate and Family Court 50 State Street Springfield, MA 01103 (413)748-7758

Docket No. HD20P0556EA

Estate of: James B Stephenson, Sr. Also known as: James B Stephenson

Date of Death: 04/08/2010

CITATION ON PETITION FOR FORMAL ADJUDICATION

To all interested persons:

A Petition for **Formal Determination of Heirs** has been filed by **James B Stephenson, Jr.** of Springfield MA requesting that the Court enter a formal Decree and Order and for such other relief as requested in the Petition.

The Petitioner requests that: **James B Stephenson, Jr.** of Springfield MA be appointed as Personal Representative(s) of said estate to serve on the bond in an **unsupervised** administration.

IMPORTANT NOTICE

You have the right to

obtain a copy of the Petition from the Petitioner or at the Court. You have a right to object to this proceeding. To do so, you or your attorney must file a written appearance and objection at this Court before: 10:00 a.m. on the return day of **04/16/2020**.

This is NOT a hearing date, but a deadline by which you must file a written appearance and objection if you object to this proceeding. If you fail to file a timely written appearance and objection followed by an affidavit of objections within thirty (30) days of the return day, action may be taken without further notice to you.

UNSUPERVISED ADMINISTRATION UNDER THE MASSACHUSETTS UNIFORM PROBATE CODE (MUPC)

A Personal Representative appointed under the MUPC in an unsupervised administration is not required to file an inventory or annual accounts with the Court. Persons interested in the estate are entitled to notice regarding the administration directly from the Personal Representative and may petition the Court in any matter relating to the estate, including the distribution of assets and expenses of administration.

WITNESS, Hon. Barbara M Hyland, First Justice of this Court.
Date: March 19, 2020
Suzanne T. Seguin
Register of Probate
4/09/2020

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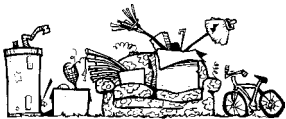
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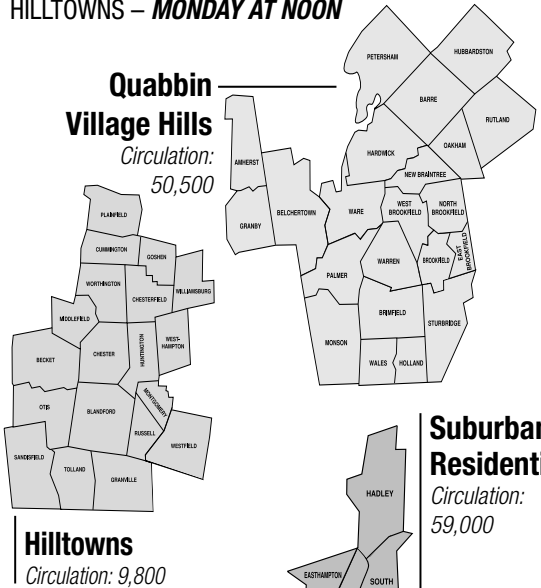
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WNEU attorney honored at ‘Leaders in Law’ event

SPRINGFIELD – Western New England University General Counsel Cheryl I. Smith, of Longmeadow, was honored at the 15th Annual “Leaders in the Law” event presented by Massachusetts Lawyers Weekly. The event was held on Thursday, March 5 at the Renaissance Boston Waterfront Hotel.

Smith was chosen from a field of nominees across the Commonwealth for the 2020 In-House Leader Award. Leader Awards recognize general counsel and staff attorneys who are nominated by their colleagues, clients and other legal professionals for being leaders in the community and forward thinkers.

For the past two decades Smith had managed all litigation commenced against Western New England University. She also supervised the legal and contractual aspects of a complex new ERP for the University. Additionally for the past two



Cheryl Smith

years, Smith has served as the Title IX Coordinator.

“Attorney Smith practices a special kind of leadership,” said Anthony S. Caprio, Western New England University president. “Her actions exemplify the noble traditions of the legal profession that are recognized and honored through this In-House Leaders in the Law award. I am thrilled to see her receive this recognition. Cheryl stands tall and always demonstrates that she can best lead folks through the issues at hand – however emotional or complex they may be.”

Smith began her academic career at Wellesley College and concluded at Western New England School of Law in 1983. At Western New England, Smith is a senior lecturer for “Human Resource Management,” “Legal Aspects of Human Resources,” “Business Law,” and “Business Communication.”

Funding available to help protect wetlands

AMHERST – The U.S. Department of Agriculture’s Natural Resources Conservation Service announced the availability of funding to help landowners protect and restore wetlands in Massachusetts. The funding is provided through the Agricultural Conservation Easement Program, which protects critical water resources and wildlife habitat, and encourages private owners to maintain land for farming.

Through the voluntary sale of an easement, landowners limit future development to protect these key resources.

“The benefits of restoring, enhancing and protecting critical wetlands cannot be overstated,” said Dan Wright, Massachusetts state conservationist for NRCS. “Wetlands provide critical habitat for a wide array of wildlife species. They also store floodwaters, clean and recharge groundwater, sequester carbon, trap sediment and filter pollutants for clean wa-

ter. USDA is committed to restoring and protecting vital sensitive wetlands that provide important wildlife habitat and improve water quality.”

ACEPs Wetland Reserve Easements allow landowners to restore, enhance and protect habitat for wildlife on their lands, reduce damage from flooding, recharge groundwater and provide outdoor recreational and educational opportunities. Eligible landowners may enroll in a permanent easement. Tribal landowners also have the option of enrolling in 30-year contracts.

Interested landowners should apply by Friday, May 1. Applications should be submitted to Helen Castles, USDA-NRCS Massachusetts State Office, 451 West St., Amherst, MA 01002.

To learn about ACEP and other technical and financial assistance available through NRCS, visit www.ma.nrcs.usda.gov.

STCC offers online workforce development training

SPRINGFIELD – Springfield Technical Community College’s Workforce Development Center offers a range of online courses available 24 hours a day from any device with an internet connection.

Online education at STCC combines interactive exercises, mini-cases, video and focused reading to ensure courses are not only engaging but that students learn.

“With many people staying home during these challenging times, now is an ideal time to take advantage of our affordable online learning programs to improve your skills or learn new ones,” said Dave Buonora, assistant vice president of workforce development.

Among the variety of programs, STCC offers a Managing Remote Employees course, which may be helpful for employers trying to figure out the best way to manage employees working from home or offsite. The course is part of MindEdge Web-Based Education’s management suite.

Job-seekers, including workers who have been laid off, also may qualify for short-term training options through MassHire.

Students who are enrolling for the purpose of meeting professional certification or licensing requirements are strongly advised to check with their specific certification or licensing authority to ensure that course content meets any requirements that have been established by that licensing or certification body.

STCC partners with the following Web-based education providers to offer online education:

- MindEdge Web-Based Education: MindEdge is a provider of online continuing education courses designed to help students improve professional knowledge and skills. Courses are available 24 hours a day from any device with an internet connection.

- Ed2Go Web-Based Education: Education to Go is an online educational content, technology and services company for higher education. They offer hundreds of online courses to assist students in finding a new career or prepare them for advancement in their current position. The programs provide an engaging, supportive, and convenient environment. They are completely online and available 24/7 so they work with any schedule.

- Online Career Training: Career Training Programs are designed by a team of experts from their respective fields. They work to provide students with a highly effective web-based learning experience. Learn in-demand skills recognized by employers. Most programs prepare students for national certification. Students can start anytime, and work at their own pace. Textbooks and learning materials are included, also loans are available. Expert instructor assistance provided.

- Professional Development for Fitness Industry: STCC has partnered with W.I.T.S. (World Instructor Training School), an organization that has been training and certifying fitness professionals for more than 24 years.

For more information, contact the Workforce Development Center at 755-4225, email wdc@stcc.edu or visit www.stcc.edu/wdc.

NAMI offers support groups via telephone

While public buildings and social gatherings have shut down statewide to limit the impact of the new coronavirus, the National Alliance on Mental Illness-Massachusetts announced call-in capabilities for its Connection Support Groups.

Effective this week, folks will be able to teleconference Mondays at 6:30 p.m., Wednesdays at 7:30 p.m. and Saturdays at 10 a.m. No password is required; participants need only call 508-206-8720.

For more information, email jmaguire@namimass.org.

Dear Loyal Customers,

We would like to take this time to thank you all for your continued support of our store. We are proud of the hard work and dedication our staff has shown these past few weeks to continue providing for our community. With Easter upon us, the staff here at 90 Meat Outlet would like to wish everyone a peaceful and joyous holiday. While we may not be able to gather with our family and friends this year, just remember we are all in this together. A special thank you goes out to all the essential workers here and everywhere who have and will continue to sacrifice themselves for others. Our hope is that we continue to unite as a community and come out stronger than ever.

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